

Traffic Advisory Committee minutes for Thursday, January 6, 2005.

In attendance: M.J. Frisoli, L. Nickens, A. Masciari, T. Riley, T. Turner, T. Olsen

Absent: , P. Curro.

Also attending: G. Clancy, S. Clippinger, Juan Avendano, Jeff Maxtutis, ~10 residents.

7:03 p.m. Meeting called to order

Administrative Matters: Minutes from November 4, 2004 were reviewed. After amendment, LN moved that the minutes be accepted as amended. AM seconded: TAC voted unanimously to accept.

(7:06) Colby Street modifications:

Discussion of the Public Hearing held November 18, 2004, on design plans of the City of Cambridge for Colby Rd. as a part of the Brighton St. Improvements. JA reported that he has modified the design to assure that snow plowing/removal will not be impeded. As to the issue of crosswalk locations, there was some discussion, concluding that the exact localization is a minor detail that can be addressed on site. GC reported that any anticipated drainage issues will be addressed as a part of the Brighton Rd. Improvement.

The proposed alteration (“chicane”) of the Blanchard Rd. roadway was discussed. A Colby St. resident opposed the chicane on the basis of his assertion that resident safety might be compromised, and averred that several other residents who were unable to attend concur with this opinion. TT asked JA to report on the experience in the City of Cambridge with chicanes. JA confirmed that chicanes at other sites reduced vehicle speed (26 m.p.h. to 23 m.p.h.) and increased yielding to pedestrians (from 15% to >80%). JA also reported that CoC will conduct a before & after speed study at this location. TO asked whether the topology of this site might alter the ability of this chicane to modify driving behavior. JA reported that similar topology exists on Concord Ave., with no obvious detrimental effect. TR asked about landscaping; JA stated that CoC plans to plant trees on its portion of the project. TT added his concern that Fran **, a representative of ADA, was not available to comment.

TR moved the the design, as amended, be recommended to the BoS. AM seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

(7:46) Bright/Blanchard/Grove design: The terms “rotary” and “roundabout” were defined. A rotary differs in that there is no cross-current traffic. S. Clippinger led a presentation including design features and an animated simulation. She emphasized that the presentation featured concept-level drawings that can be modified. Jeff Maxtutis and Dennis Flynn presented the “SimTraffic” simulation. JM explained how the intersection (Grove/Blanchard) was modeled, using traffic count values from 2003, and adjusted for estimated current values. Some discussion about the adequacy of the model, and how the predicted flow matches current experience. Different simulations representing a T-intersection (“Option A”) and a roundabout (Option C”) were viewed. JM concluded that the roundabout worked surprisingly well—at peak, the cue heading northbound on Grove was reduced from 700 ft. to 300 ft. Concerns about cues on Blanchard Rd. EASTBOUND could be addressed by lengthening the eastbound/northbound signal cycle at Concord Ave. TO suggests that a two-lane solution for the Grove St. approach. Several residents were concerned about egress from residential driveways. B. Bossert expressed concern about traffic volumes and speeds in the proposed roundabout. TO points out that volume and speed through an intersection are not necessarily at odds. JM reiterated that the design can be

modified to address the concerns over vehicle speed entering the intersection. Other concerns over pedestrian safety were expressed. Another resident rejects the roundabout on the basis of esthetics. MF reminded those attending that the primary goal of the TAC is to improve pedestrian and vehicular safety. Other concerns, while not negligible, are of second order. Foremost among the second-order concerns is the issue of driveway egress for residents abutting the intersection.

TT suggested that much of the concerns over the configuration are based not on fact or data, but rather are based on an emotional response to unconventional designs. He asked for an opinion from the experts as to the optimal design solution given the criteria established by the TAC. S. Clippinger enumerated three significant considerations in favor of the roundabout (Option C). JM further agreed that Option C will serve as a traffic calming device, and will be the best of the possible solutions for a difficult pedestrian safety problem. The implementation of pedestrian refuge islands will help reduce crossing distances and encourage drivers to yield to pedestrians.

TAC will obtain further information on driveway egress, fire department consultation, and how different geometries of the roundabout design on vehicle speeds. GC would like a comparative analysis of driveway solutions between Options A and C so that property owners could view their options.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:41 p.m.